



European
Commission

THE REPEATED FAILURE AT LAUNCHING A COMPREHENSIVE EU FOREST POLICY FRAMEWORK

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Developments related to Forest Policies

From the 1970' until now:

a number of attempts to bridge irreconcilable and occasionally changing differences,

to end up finally with:

a non-legally binding institutional platform for forest policy discussions (= EU Forestry Strategy 1998 with carefully chosen principles and objectives, containing all the right ideas but commit no one properly to do anything about them)

Current Policy Framework

- **Member States (MS)**: Forest competencies are found in different Ministries (Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development, Natural Resources, Industries)
- **EU**: A steady encroachment of a number of EU policies on forestry: Rural Development, Environment, Trade, R&D, Plant health, Energy & Climate Change

→ a few examples:

EU Common Agriculture Policy

2nd pillar: Rural Development

- **Based on MS regional / national programmes**
 - EU establishes framework conditions and “menu card”
 - MS draft the programmes / financial allocations (88.3 EUR billion)
 - MS responsible for implementation
- **Relatively low consideration of forestry by MS:**

Forestry measures between 6 – 9% (max. EUR 8 billion)

 - competition with the agricultural sector
 - implementation conditions (EU+MS) not easy to handle
 - MS financial contribution limited
 - generally weak support to environmental measures (N2k)

Rural Dev. Programmes 2007-2013

implementation of forest measures (estimations EU27)

- **Investments:**

- infrastructure projects (40 000)

- increasing the economic value of forest holdings (150 000)

- **Environment:**

- afforestation (800 000ha, 145 000 forest owners)

- N2k payments (400 000ha forests, 60 000 forest owners)

- Forest-environment payments: (2 million ha, 75 000 holdings)

- Prevention/restoration: (2 million ha, 120 000 actions)

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COM proposal Rural Development 2014 – 2020

Menu card has been enlarged:

- Advisory services, knowledge transfer, Investments
- Producer groups, cooperation (clusters, networks)
- Afforestation, agro-forestry, fires/natural disasters
- Environmental investments, Natura 2000 +WFD payments, forest environmental/climate services

Discussions at present time:

- forest management plans
- measures beyond mandatory requirements / SFM
- private forest owners, municipalities – public forests

Natura 2000 network of protected areas

2 Directives: the Habitat's Directive (1992) and the Birds Directive (1970)

- Objectives: avoidance of habitat deterioration / procedures for new development projects
- Concerns: >1000 species, 230 habitat types on 27 000 sites (17.5%); **scientific designation done by MS**
- Living landscapes: in most cases, **economic use combined with ecological conservation**
- Subsidiarity: MS responsible for implementation of N2k, particular importance to cross-border protection;
- Forests:
 - ca. 50% of N2k areas are under a forest coverage
 - ca. 22% of the EU forest area is under N2k management
 - 83 of 230 habitat types are forest types

N2k-forestry: > conflicting discourses

- ❑ ***EU law is not an invention from Brussels: adopted by all MS, EP***
- ❑ ***Implementing + enforcing EU ENV. law is a shared task (national, regional and local authorities)***
- **Communication**: between ministries and with the stakeholders
Information/consultation/participation/transparency
- **Governance**: Organisational structures/decision-making - processes clearly defined (EU + MS)
- **Implementation**: flexibility (multi-functionality, SFM), financial support
 - **Frequently mistrust, suspicion between parties**
 - **Often more emotional than rational driven debates**
 - **Missing recognition of voluntary services**
 - **a certain degree of de-motivation from land owners**

Much more EU issues related to forests.....

- **Illegal logging(FLEGT)**: EU timber regulation (2013)
- **Energy, bio-economy**: criteria for forest biomass?
- **Green economy**: public procurement, eco-label...
- planned revision of **EU Directives on Plant Health** (pine nematode) and **propagation of forest reproductive material** (ash dieback), invasive species,
- **R&D, INFO, PES, LULUCF, LBA, international...**

Should we simply continue:

...the mantra that the EU and in particular the Commission has not any role in forest policy..... while at the same time it should provide funding, be a useful secretarial whipping boy for certain actions (EU statistics, R&D, LBA, UNFF...)and all this based on ambiguous, not clearly defined principles (SFM, multi-functionality) purposefully put together in an empty eggshell??

Are we now burning the last straw?

- MS negotiate a "pan-European" LBA
- Disengagement from the 1998 EU forest strategy (it is 12 years old, it does not anymore deliver)
- The discussions on a revision: tend to go for even lowering the least common denominator and will most probably end up with some Council Conclusions where real policy impact will be most probably questionable
- Question: why are MS prepared to go for such "window-dressing", if they don't want any EU forest policy? (--> do they see it at the best way to avoid EU legislation and at the same time to be present and appear busy??);
- My lesson learned: *a symbolic framework such as the EU Forestry Strategy cannot facilitate coordination, it may be a realistic alternative to inaction, but with the danger of wasting a lot of institutional energy and distracting attention from other avenues of action.*

A permanent cul-de-sac?

- MS forest policies cannot be successful at EU level in simply agreeing to disagree on most EU measures and trying to eviscerate any new initiatives from other sectors
→ It is not enough to communicate on what you don't want....
- MS should start to make up their mind on what they really want to do together on European level in addition to their MS forest policies; approaches may be of different nature:
 - Adequate information and communication possibilities
 - EU financial support for forest measures,
 - Substantial policy impact in certain EU policies where forestry is playing a significant role on the ground.

Remember: most EU decision-making processes rely to a large extent on MS choices

Rural Development regulation: prepared by COM, decided by Council + EP

Rural Development Programmes: prepared by MS, decided by COM, implemented by MS

Natura 2000 (Habitats Directive): designation of sites by MS, implementation by MS

Example recently given by a German private forest owner on NSG-VO 2004

→57 mandatory demands or prohibitions out of them 25% can be attributed to the Habitats Directive, the rest is "add on"

Example given recently by the N2k forest guidance scoping document



Policy coordination / impact Changes are needed within MS

- Policy coordination has to take place where decisions are taken and political choices are done: → domestic level is essential: more visibility on how do MS forest policies really address (legal, financial, tax measures) a number of issues (employment, climate change, biodiversity, renewable energies), how they define SFM, role of public forests...
- Coordination with other policy sectors (especially agree with MS responsible representatives in EU Management or Consultative Committees, Working parties... on common approaches and positions)



Develop an action framework at EU level to support MS forest policies

- What R&D efforts should be done together
- Coordination of specific cross-border actions (pests..)
- Coordination of external policy actions (LBA,...)
- Information sharing on policy measures (FLEGT, N2k...)
- Policy outlook on items such as bio-economy, energy...

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Final message: don't forget that MS forest policies should be more than an economic and legal framework for an industrial sector....



Thank you for your attention

Ich frage mich was Ökonomen tun würden, wenn man ihnen die Aufgabe übertragen würde, die Arbeit eines Sinfonieorchesters zu optimieren,

Wahrscheinlich würden sie alle Pausen in Beethovens Konzerten streichen, - sie sind ja schließlich zu nichts gut, sie halten nur den Lauf der Dinge auf, und die Mitglieder des Orchesters können doch nicht dafür bezahlt werden, dass sie nicht spielen....

(Thomas Sedlacek: die Ökonomie von Gut und Böse)